



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

**For Immediate Release:**

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### **Jessup Man Pleads Guilty to Human Trafficking and Prostitution**

A 27-year-old Jessup man has pleaded guilty to human trafficking and prostitution charges arising from advertisements posted online last February. Jabari A. Theodore, of the 10000 block of Guilford Road pleaded guilty before Howard County Circuit Court Judge William V. Tucker this morning.

In February, detectives were investigating a robbery and were seeking to interview Theodore and a young woman. The detectives recognized the woman as a known victim of human trafficking and located an ad for prostitution in the Laurel area on the website Backpage.com. In April, the FBI and additional federal law enforcement agencies seized the sex marketplace website and shut it down. Police regularly monitored the website which was known to be used for prostitution, often involving girls who are victims of trafficking.

An undercover detective responded to the ad on February 27 and agreed to meet the woman at a hotel located in the 9800 block of Washington Boulevard, Laurel. When the detectives went to the woman's room, they noticed Jabari Theodore walk out of a side door at the hotel. Assistant State's Attorney Colleen McGuinn told the court that hotel staff and the woman reported that Theodore rented the room. The woman also told police that Theodore coordinated her appointments and encouraged her to perform sex acts for money which he would then take from her.

Judge Tucker set a sentencing date of November 9.

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